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Abdullah's message to civil servants

PUTRAJAYA: On his last day in office, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi had only one message for civil servants — remain committed to your work and take firm action to spur the public sector forward.

The outgoing prime minister said his only hope was to see civil servants providing the best service to the people and the country.

Abdullah yesterday hosted a farewell lunch for about 130 staff members of the Prime Minister's Office and Defence Ministry at the prime minister's official residence, Seri Perdana.

Present were his wife Datin Seri Jeanne Abdullah and Islamic adviser to the prime minister, Datuk Abdullah Md Zin.

"It is my fervent hope that while young people continue to work diligently and explore new things, those who are retiring will contribute their vast experience and expertise."

He expressed his gratitude to the staff and officers and wished them luck.

"Many thanks for your ser-

lah who had just returned from Istana Negara where he submitted his resignation.

"If there are mistakes or wrongdoing on my part, my wife and the late (Datin Seri) Endon (Mahmood), forgive us. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the support given to us."

Later in Kuala Lumpur, Abdullah chaired his last Armed Forces Council meeting before bidding farewell to officers and staff of the Defence Ministry.

He inspected a guard-of-honour comprising three officers and 103 other ranks from the navy, the air force and the army which was mounted by the First Battalion, Royal Malay Regiment, led by Maj Norhisyam Kamar.

Abdullah was given a rousing send-off in a ceremonial jeep pulled by soldiers.

Present were ministry secretary-general Datuk Abu Bakar Abdullah, Armed Forces chief Gen Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Zainal and the tri-services chiefs.

Abdullah took over as defence minister on Sept 17 last year.